



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
St. Louis District®

# News Release

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## **Navigation on Upper Mississippi River is Hampered by Winter Weather, Ice**

ST. LOUIS, December 8 – Even with the help of Dredges Potter and America working around the clock to ensure commercial navigation on the Mississippi River continues to operate, concessions must be made to restrict navigation on the Nation's vital waterway.

Yesterday, the Coast Guard, in conjunction with the River Industry Action Committee and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, issued a Low Water Advisor for the Upper Mississippi River from its confluence with the Ohio River to Locks 27 in Granite City, Ill., specifying restrictions to tow size and draft of the vessels (*see the latest U.S. Coast Guard navigation notices - <http://www.ribb.com/navnotice.html>*).

"The low water conditions on the Mississippi (River) are the result of several factors," said Joan Stemler, Chief of Water Control Operations for the St. Louis District Corps of Engineers. "Certainly the drought which continues over the upper Midwest is a factor, but in the winter, ice formations on the rivers play a big part as well and will typically cut the flow in half. That's what we are seeing right now on the Mississippi and Illinois rivers."

Water that would normally flow downriver becomes a solid and is trapped in the navigation pools throughout the system.

The river stage in St. Louis dropped more than three feet in 24-hours before settling out at -3.4 feet this afternoon. The last time the river at the St. Louis gage was this low was when it dropped to -4.4 in January 2003. The record low for this date was -3.8 feet in 1937.

When the river gage in St. Louis reads -4 feet, the river's navigation channel is approximately nine feet, the minimum depth Congress mandates that the Corps of Engineers must maintain for the river industry.